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ABSTRACT

The concern over the numbers of minority and women educational researchers is based on the importance of including minorities and women in the educational research endeavor (and all other endeavors) and the epistemological premise that a researcher's perspectives on the topic affect the questions asked, data collected, and interpretation and analysis. It is important to ask new questions to guide the research about the schooling failures of minority group members (disproportionately to their numbers in the population), and preferably, these questions should be asked by members of the minority groups. Data on earned doctorates for 1976 (4,067 males and 1,735 females) and 1987 (3,037 males and 3,565 females) show the potential pool of educators is becoming more female. However, there has been a decline in the numbers of minority group members (e.g., 492 Blacks in 1976, 421 Blacks in 1987), except Hispanics (87 in 1976, 188 in 1987) receiving doctorates. "Learnings" include: internal structural changes must be addressed to alter institutional barriers to the participation of women and minorities in research; it is difficult to develop programs that force mentor relationships (even though they are good); minorities and women need more than skills to be productive in the research field; and instructional change occurs when a project's purpose is consistent with that of the host institution. It is important for the individual and institution to be committed to the goal, willing to alter structures, and able to provide opportunities responsive to the needs of those they serve. (SM)

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PREPARING MINORITIES AND WOMEN AS RESEARCHERS: HAVE WE LEARNED ANYTHING?

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Although the title of the paper may seem cynical and project a negative conclusion, I do believe that we, as a field, have learned something about preparing minorities and women as researchers. As is usual in education, we hold a lot more knowledge than we use!

My presentation is organized as follows: First, there is a very brief recounting of the reasons that the participation of minorities and women is important. For some of us, obviously, there is a personal dimension, but the argument also addresses why such participation is valuable to the field. Second, some data about participation rates will be presented. The data used in this paper are limited for reasons discussed in that section. Finally, I will address what I think we've learned, using as sources of information the study of the late National Institute of Education (NIE) Program to Increase the Participation of Minorities and Women in Educational Research, discussions in the literature, and my own observations.

The Importance of the Issue

Why should there be concern about the numbers (and influence) of minority and women educational researchers? There are two parts to the answer. The first is a simple equity response--it is **right** to include minorities and women in the educational research endeavor, as in all other endeavors. The second part reflects an epistemological premise that the perspectives a researcher brings to bear on a topic affect the questions asked, the data collected, and the analysis and interpretation. We have only to contrast Sari Knopf Biklen's or Sarah Freedman's work on teachers with Dan Lortie's to demonstrate the difference between the ways feminist researchers approach a field in which women predominate and the way it is approached by a man. Both offer important insights, but the absence of a feminist perspective for years limited our understanding of teaching as a profession. It is not that men **cannot** be feminists; it's just that they so seldom are! Further, in contrast to logical positivist views, the epistemological stance reflected here holds that the lived experience leads to the questions of importance for research and men cannot live the experience of women. Once women raise questions that arise from their lives, others can recognize their importance and pursue research along similar lines.

The two examples cited above can be pushed a bit further. Biklen's research on how women teachers define and view their work offers a perspective on incentives--a popular topic for policy--to which policymakers should attend as they implement the wide variety of programs that are designed to attract and retain superior teachers. Similarly, Freedman's research that demonstrates the divisiveness of school structure has major implications for policy and practice.

The issue of perspective is perhaps more significant in terms of bringing the perspectives of members of minority groups to bear on educational research. We have all been impressed with the demographic projections that show the rapid increase of minorities in school. We all also know that schooling has failed minority group members disproportionately to their numbers in the population. Research into that failure has yielded some findings with potential for

changing policy and practice, but clearly not enough. I would assert that the questions that guide the research have inadequately captured the phenomena under scrutiny, that new questions need to be asked, and that members of minority groups (who have lived the experience of being a minority student in the schools) are the likely posers of those questions.

Participation Rates

The data presented here is limited for two reasons. The first of these is that there is limited time to present them. The second reason is more telling about the concerns of our political and social arena: In 1977, John Egermeier prepared an exhaustive synthesis of statistics about minorities and women in educational research--including information about employment (where and at what levels) and the entire pipeline to research careers, starting with the transition from high school to college. The work he did relied on existing data sets, many of which no longer provide the depth of information about minorities and women as they once did. Further, even AERA, which does provide membership information, does not have the staff power to analyze this data in all the ways that would be useful--for this paper or for policy. In the good old days, the National Institute of Education (NIE) funded AERA to provide more detailed analyses (see Campbell and Brown, 1982), but its successor, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), does not make that a priority. Some data do exist, and they will be used to frame the discussion of what we have learned.

Although not all educational researchers hold doctorates nor do all doctoral holders in education perform research or research-related functions, the numbers and percentages of minorities and women earning doctorates can give an approximation of their status in educational research. The following table compares doctoral recipients in 1987 with those in 1976:

	1976		1987	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total	5802		5595	
Male	4067	71.0	3037	46.0
Female	1735	29.0	3565	54.0
White	4930	85.0	4820	86.0
Black	492	8.0	421	7.5
American Indian	38	.7	26	.4
Asian	110	2.0	58	1.0
Hispanic	87	1.4	188	3.3

(Percentages are rounded)
Sources: 1975 Survey of Earned Doctorates, National Academy of Sciences; 1986 Survey of Earned Doctorates, National Research Council.

Clearly, the potential pool of educational researchers is becoming more female. If the trend continues (and data on college entrance and completion indicate that it may well), I will no longer deliver papers to predominantly male audiences at AERA!

There is less to applaud when we look at the data concerning minorities. For all minority groups, except Hispanics, there has been a decline in the numbers receiving doctorates. The increase in Hispanic doctorates reflects the growth in the percentage of Hispanics in the population. However, there is also a rise in the numbers of Asians in the population, which is not reflected in the earned doctorates in education. Further, although the decline in the number of Black doctoral recipients in education is minor (.5 percent), two facts indicate that there will be greater declines in the future. First, the median age of all those who receive doctorates in education is higher than those in other fields (39.4 as compared to 33.5 as an average of all fields.) Second, the numbers of Blacks who received doctorates in all fields declined by 25%. The likelihood is that education will show a similar decrease over the next five to ten years because the decrease in doctorates earned is directly related to the decrease in numbers of Blacks attending college (33.5% of high school graduates in 1976; 26.1% in 1985).

What We Have Learned

The "learnings" discussed in this section come from one formal source (the study of NIE's Program to Increase the Participation of Minorities and Women in Educational Research), inferences drawn from the literature, and my own observations.

NIE sponsored a moderately sized Experimental Program to Increase the Participation of Minorities and Women in Educational Research (MWP), funding 56 projects at a cost of about eleven million dollars. It was in existence from 1977 to 1982. The types of projects that were funded were based on the knowledge then available about barriers to participation. The core idea was for the projects not only to "help individual minority group members and women to participate at an advanced level of educational research and related work," but also to accomplish two other goals. The first was to "assist institutions to establish policies and practices that enhance participation of minorities and women in all aspects of educational research and overcome barriers to recognition of their research contribution, perspectives, and interests." The second was to "develop knowledge, information, and strategies to advance the foregoing objectives." Whatever successes the program may have had in aiding individuals and institutions, I believe that the last objective was never met because the program was too short lived and the evaluation and research necessary to achieve that final objective was even shorter and more underfunded (two years for a total of $500,000).

Inter-America, Inc., in its study of the Program, concluded:

1. Although mentor relationships are important factors in preparing researchers, it is difficult to develop programs that force such relationships. The projects that were most successful included ample support services for participants and moved to more collegial/collaborative working arrangements.

2. Institutional change occurred when the project's purpose was consistent with that of the host institution, and the project had multiple points of support within the institution and the institution's community.

3. Institutional barriers to the participation of minorities and women in research cannot be altered by merely providing individuals with training. Internal structural changes must be addressed.

4. Minorities and women need more than skills to be productive in the research field. They need the opportunity to develop professional networks, to interact with experienced researchers, to write and to publish.

5. Short term training strategies and approaches, such as workshops, conferences, and seminars, are most effective for: a) enhancing research-related or personal skills of the postdoctoral scholars and experienced professionals who already have a well-grounded background in research methodology, management, and/or administrative processes; b) school-based practitioners or pre-doctoral researchers who are seeking to update or keep abreast of current issues and trends in educational r&d; and c) inexperienced professionals and/or researchers who are seeking to enhance career-related or technical skills such as proposal writing skills.

6. Long term training approaches, such as internships and fellowships, are most effective for: a) developing or building the research skills of the novice or inexperienced researcher; b) providing the time and opportunity for pre- and post-doctoral researchers and/or experienced professionals to conduct research, to write, and to publish. Internships are particularly effective for mid-career professionals who are seeking to supplement their occupational skills or who are looking for a career change to one in which research plays a more prominent role.

In short, there are no quick paths to increasing the participation of minorities and women in educational research. Institutions and the individuals in them must be committed to the goal, alter structures, and provide opportunities that are responsive to the needs of those they serve. They must take into account, for example, the greater financial sacrifice that a research career requires from most minority group members than from majority males.

The results of the study of the NIE program are reinforced by articles published since then and my own observations. Further, the phenomenal increase in the number of females who receive doctorates in education provides some clues as to how we can apply what we've learned. The increase of the number of women

doctorates has occurred within a context that has fostered women's self-assurance and has forced institutions to address the barriers to women's achievement. Ten years ago, there was little discussion--and less action--about the need for child care in order to remove a major barrier to women's achievement in any field. Now day care is a "hot topic," and even Orrin Hatch supports federal legislation to encourage day care.

Such action not only removes a barrier but legitimizes women's concerns and makes them public concerns. I will illustrate the difference out of my own experience. I entered graduate school as a successful teacher with an excellent academic background. I was also a single parent of an infant. During the discussions about my fellowship support, questions were actually raised about what child care arrangements I'd made and whether I would be diverted from my pursuit of the doctorate by remarriage. At that time, I took upon myself those problems--it never occurred to me (or to most people) to ask: "And what support do you provide that will help me substitute for the subsidy or help in finding jobs that you provide for the wives of my male colleagues?" The point is that the efforts of feminists (at some sacrifice to themselves and with few direct rewards) have changed the nature of how women view ourselves and how we are viewed.

The climate has not altered for minorities during the same period. There is little recognition of the fact that most minority group members need to begin to realize the return on the investment for college rather rapidly. There is even less recognition that differences in race or ethnicity creates psychological barriers between mentors and mentees that require both additional support services for the mentee **and** a shift to a less tutorial and more collegial view of doctoral students on the part of the mentor.

Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned about increasing the participation of minorities and women in educational research relates to the epistemological issue. That is, if minorities and women are to pursue research careers, the questions and issues that they bring to the endeavor must be acknowledged as legitimate. Graduate study--and the conduct of research itself--requires commitment and some sacrifice. For members of minority groups, particularly, the demand for sacrifice is even greater than for white males. If that demand is accompanied by questions of the validity or importance of topics offered for research, the appearance of such questions, or the imposition of topics that are irrelevant (or offensive) to the potential researchers, then it is difficult to imagine a commitment to research. The hopeful note in all of this is that if research is published that rings true to the lived experience of minority group members, more may become interested in being researchers!